

**REMARKS**

In complete response to the Office Action dated December 20, 2005, on the above identified application, reconsideration is respectfully requested. Claims 22-25 are pending in this application.

**Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102:**

Claims 22 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Bland et al. '747. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 22 and 23 are not anticipated by Bland et al. '747,

Bland et al. '747 requires the welding of a "back-up ring on the inner surface of the first steel pipe" (see column 2, lines 21-24, Figures 1-5, and see also claims 1 and 4-7). Claim 22 of the present invention explicitly requires that "said joining pieces are externally welded to said pieces of equipment". All elements of the independent claim are not found in Bland et al. '747, and therefore the rejection should be withdrawn as improper.

Bland et al. '747 requires that the back-up bar (or ring) is welded to a first member, then, "after welding, the member 11 having the back-up bar 12 welded thereto was dipped in molten aluminum and a coating of aluminum 14 was obtained" (see column 2, lines 24-26, see also claims 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7). Claim 22 of the present invention explicitly requires that "said protecting of said joining pieces occurs prior to said welding of said joining pieces." All elements of the independent claim are not found in Bland et al. '747, and therefore the rejection should be withdrawn as improper.

Appl. No. 10/603,530  
Amdt. dated April 19, 2006  
Reply to Office Action of December 20, 2005

## CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe a telephone call would expedite the prosecution of the application, he is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Elwood Haynes, Reg. No. 55,254

Date: April 19, 2006

Air Liquide  
2700 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 1800  
Houston, Texas 77056  
Phone: (713) 624-8954  
Fax: (713) 624-8950

### CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 CFR 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2006.

  
Diana Guzman